

Minister of Public Works
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Parliamentary Media Briefing

One of the greatest challenges which face this Government, is the country's massive unemployment figure, poverty, crime and the need for general upliftment of communities which can be labelled as the poorest of poor. Our ANC led government regards it as not only our duty to urgently and pro-actively alleviate poverty and stimulate employment creation, but also as part of our civil responsibility to care for those in need who for centuries have borne the brunt of dispossession, unequal development and stark disparities.

The purpose of today's briefing session is to share some background detail on the Department of Public Works' Community Based Public Works Programme, and specifically the fast-track Rural Anti Poverty Programme targeted over the last three months in critical areas in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Northern Province.

Firstly, I would like to share some background detail with you about the Community Based Public Works Programme which will provide you with a broader understanding of the Department's vision.

To address the issue of poverty and the upliftment of communities, the Community Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) was devised by the Department of Public Works. This Programme can be described as people-centred and people-driven programme, a programme for the people, by the people. Communities themselves are directly involved in defining, planning and implementing projects which comply with the goals set out for this Programme. In other words, it's an empowering and enabling programme.

This programme targets the poorest communities, especially in rural areas, women and women who are heads of households. It supports improved access to trade opportunities such as roads, bridges and markets. And aims to promote the direct productive process in the community like food production, irrigation, refuse collection, replenishment of building materials and maintenance of community assets.

Other aims include labour-saving mechanisms such as water and fuel supply, social cohesion of the community in the form of multi-purpose halls and sport facilities, and environmental protection such as erosion protection, bush clearing and sanitation.

Taking into account who we are trying to reach and what the Programme aims to support, it is important to share our goals with you. These can be summarised as follows:

Generate temporary employment during construction of community assets by adopting labour intensive methods.

Create permanent income-generating activities through the operation and maintenance of community productive assets

Upgrade the living standards and quality of life of the poorest segments of the population by providing basic community level infrastructure

Stabilise and improve community livelihood which are threatened by drought and other disasters

Build capacity of local development organisations and local government structures to manage community development ventures

Promote partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and the civil society in managing community development ventures.

During November last year, Cabinet allocated R85 million to the Department of Public Works for the implementation of a Rural Anti Poverty Programme (RAP) in accordance with the principles of the Community Based Public Works Programme. Given the timeframes within the financial year-end regulations, the Department decided to adopt a fast-track approach to ensure that priority communities enjoy maximum benefit from this additional funding.

The Rural Anti Poverty Programme targets rural areas and within these areas, focuses on the creation of sustainable employment opportunities for women. This has been deemed necessary in the view of the negative impact unemployment and poverty has on women as the main breadwinners in the majority of rural households.

It is a fact that poverty in South African rural areas is a serious problem which requires a co-ordinated approach by Community-Based Organisations, local government structures, the private sector, specialist institutions and Government.

It is for this reason that the Department has consulted broadly in conceptualising its approach and process in addressing these needs. There has been unanimity in terms of the focus as well as the expected impact.

Cabinet's decision to make funding available meant that the affected officials within the Department had to work tirelessly throughout the festive period. The priority areas to be targeted had to be carefully defined and relevant local structures had to be consulted, mobilised and empowered to drive this programme. Liaison had to take place with District Councils, Transitional Local Government Councils, women's development organisations and community structures in general.

The priority areas which are to be targeted in this Rural Anti Poverty Campaign, are the Eastern Cape, Qumbu and Tsolo. These are areas where unemployment and poverty has resulted in crime, violence and the total destruction of the social infrastructure and local economy. Stock theft has also virtually destroyed the agricultural sector. A recent commission of enquiry has cited unemployment as the major contributing factor to the appalling conditions prevailing in these communities.

In KwaZulu-Natal, the areas of Empangeni Shobashobane and Nongoma will be targeted. These areas face similar problems, including social deprivation, which has resulted in polarisation. Targeted projects would therefore include social binding programmes in the reconstruction and development of these communities.

The Northern Province areas of Ha-mulima, Ga-modjadji (Bolobedu), Ga-ramogale and Ga-mamabolo face added problems in terms of adverse climate conditions and ritual violence. Projects would therefore be aimed at promoting mutual understanding through community upliftment projects and drought resistance schemes.

These areas have been specifically singled out to benefit from this Cabinet funding as unemployment and poverty have manifested themselves in violence and crime. It is important to note that violence and crime are the most serious threats to our fledgling democracy.

And for this reason, the Department has decided to use the funding for the RAP to develop projects which will reconstruct and develop the lives of the communities who have been badly affected by violence and crime. This process intends to turn the negative impact thereof into economic opportunities which will drastically improve the lives of the people in the affected, and surrounding areas

This initiative will make a concrete impact on the lives of the targeted rural communities. In the initial four month period, 12 800 temporary jobs and 3840 sustainable jobs will be created. Of this 8320 will be women, which comprises approximately 65% of the total target group. In addition, the projects will also facilitate substantial training opportunities for all those participating in the project. This training includes vocational training related to the various projects such as building and plumbing as well as life-skills. A major focus of the training component is to develop the institutional capacity of those involved, particularly the local authorities.

I am proud to announce that the process has been handled in a manner which ensures transparency and a high level of participation in the decision-making process. Although this programme has come at a time when most people were expecting a well-deserved break with family and friends, local structures and community organisations were willing to attend meetings with members of this Department and the programme management support team. This displays the high level of commitment found among members of our society in finding real and lasting solutions in creating a society which is free and fair, and allows for the development of our most important assets, our people and our country.

The Rural Anti Poverty Programme therefore gives the Department the opportunity to support (on a pilot basis) projects which will contribute towards the building of a productive infrastructure within the targeted communities. There will, however, be a need to support those projects that would promote social cohesion among the communities in general and those that will contribute towards labour-saving processes among women in particular.

Most rural communities in South Africa and in the targeted areas in particular, regard agriculture as a source of food employment and income generation. In line with the principles of the Community Based Public Works Programmes, which I have shared with you, the Department has decided to support the construction of community-based assets that would expand the opportunities of the communities in this regard.

Typical projects include access roads, livestock dipping and handling facilities, micro irrigation schemes, village bridges for access, woodlots, contour construction, livestock dams, shearing sheds, markets, storage facilities, fencing of grazing and arable lands, proper waiting and selling facilities at bus and taxi ranks, spring protection multi-purpose centres, sport and recreation facilities. building of classrooms in partnership with the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help, and many more.

The project listing is not exhaustive in terms of the needs of the communities, but is an indication of the type of projects that would bring about a significant socio-economic impact in the targeted areas.

I want to emphasise the partnership approach to the implementation of the Rural Anti Poverty Programme. Local government institutions are a constitutional reality in our country and therefore need to be empowered to be active participants in the community development process. They also have a critical role to play in the Masakhane programme of the Government.

It is therefore imperative that a programme of the nature of the Community Based Public Works Programmes to recognise this level of government as well as its inevitable role in the delivery process and sustainability thereof. The RAP has embraced these important institutional arrangements and has since worked closely with the District Councils and Transitional Local Councils in project identification and prioritisation, appointment of project consultants, project scheduling broader interactions with the communities and project financial arrangements.

The department has, however, not underplayed the importance of the provincial departments of Public Works in the monitoring and control processes to ensure adherence to the policy, objectives and principles of the Department and the CBPWP. Within the CBPWP, the departments are therefore the critical link between the national policies and objectives and the realisation of these at a local level. To be able to play this role, the provincial and the national departments have agreed on administrative and managerial arrangements that would ensure success of the programme.

As far as the financial controls and disbursements are concerned, the Department has appointed a programme management team and an auditing firm who would provide support in order to ensure adherence to treasury instructions of the Office of the Exchequer. The Programme Management Support team has completed the process of evaluating the capacity of the District Councils in the management of the project finances. In cases where such a capacity is not at the required level, arrangements have been made to provide training and capacity building. This is yet another indication of the seriousness and commitment of the Department in the process of empowering the local government structures in their responsibility of delivering services to the communities.

As you can see, all mechanisms has been put in place to negotiate the Anti Rural Poverty Programme, implement and account for this programme. The timeframes for Programme therefore looks as follows:

19 November 1997:	Cabinet allocates R85 million to the Programme
21 November 1997 to 1 December 1997:	The departments of Public Works in the three targeted provinces are briefed by our Deputy Director-General
9 December 1997:	Appointment of the Project Management Teams and their briefing on the Programme process
10 - 23 December 1997:	Interaction with the District Councils by the provincial departments of Public Works and the Project Management Teams.
29 December 1997:	Workshopping of the financial arrangements by the Project Management Teams and the Department of Public Works
29 December 1997 to 9 January 1998:	Evaluation of the financial management capacity of the District Councils and identification of the projects by the communities and the District Councils.

The road ahead looks as follows:

12 January 1998:	Project appraisal by the Provincial Co-ordination Committee
20 to 21 January 1958:	Project approvals by the National Programme Management Committee
23 January 1998:	Communication of the Committee's decisions to the District Councils and the communities
29 January to 30 June 1998:	Implementation of the project commence through a process of tendering! design. project plans. construction, etc.

In conclusion, the Rural Anti Poverty Programme is a fast-track programme which will be implemented in accordance with the principles of the Community Based Public Works Programme. The process is in line with the re-aligned CBPWP and is intended to fight poverty using the creation of opportunities for the rural women and communities in general. The programme recognises the need for the empowerment of the local government structures in order to improve the sustainability of the process. It is therefore in line with the Masakhane programme where the communities are provided with opportunities for development and ability to pay for the maintenance of the services.

There are more than 50 villages that are targeted by this fast-track programme and these are:

KwaZulu - Natal

- Nongoma

- * Usuthu Tribal Authority

- Nyokeni
 - Mahashini
 - Obhuqu
 - Linduzulu
 - Khangela
 - Kwakhetha
 - Khanana

- * Mandlakazi Tribal Authority

- Buxdene
 - Mona
 - Umbombowemvu

- Ezingolweni

- Nkulu
 - Ilovinga
 - Mbeni
 - Bandlana
 - Ngcawusha
 - Shobashobane
 - Shoba
 - Mndlasi

- Mpangeni

- * Madlebe Tribal Authority

- Eriwe
 - Mevamhlophe
 - Bingoma

- * Kwamthethwa Tribal Authority

Mhlana
Dondotha
Ocilwane
Nhlabusini

- * Yanguya Tribal Authority

Konjane

- * Others

Mambuka
Obuka
Ubizo

- Eastern Cape (Tsolo and Qumbu)

Ngqeleni
Malepelepe
Ngxolo
Ngxakolo
Tsatshala
Swazini
Ramate
Ngxaza
Ncembu
Mbonisweni
Nochunsi
Upper Mjika
Luxeni
Nyibiba
Nkukweni
Gqunu
Kohlopong
Nqayi
Madukuda
Maqanyeni
Mjikelweni
Mdabukweni
Mdeni
Sithaleni
Phelindaba/Gwesa
Xhokonxa

More villages will be added as soon as the TLCs have agreed in the programme.

- Northen Province

Ga-Mokwakwaila
Paledi
Sephaphushe
Makanye
Ga-Rampogale Tsatsaneng
Mokgohloa No.1 and 2
Moshate
Makgwareng
Noko (Subiaco and Magokubu)
Nobordy
Mogoring
Ga-Ramogale

TABLE 1 Expected jobs to be created per area by calender

PROVINCE	TOTAL NUMBER OF JOBS	WOMEN EMPLOYED	TOTAL NUMBER OF OF PEOPLE TO BENEFIT
Eastern Cape	4 800	3 120	33 600
Northern Province	3 733	2 427	26 131
KwaZulu-Natal	4 267	2 773	29 869
TOTAL	12 800	8 320	89 600

It is worth mentioning that the total number of sustainable jobs to be created through the revival of small-scale agriculture and community entrepreneurship are as follows:

PROVINCE	NUMBER OF JOBS	WOMENEMPLOYED
Eastern Cape	1 440	936
Northern Province	1 120	728
KwaZulu-Natal	1 280	832
TOTAL	3 840	2 496

4. TRAINING

The training of the communities will be on the job and there will be no off the project training. It is therefore expected that the 12 800 people who are expected to be employed over the duration of the project will benefit from such a training programme. There will, however, be training of workers specific skills and approximately 500 people will receive such training. It is expected that they will use these skills beyond the project.

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